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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 IGA-02 OMB-01 /052 W
---------- 074986
R 131400Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7116
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY AMMAN

S E C R E T SANA 0123

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, YE
SUBJECT: CABINET CHANGES IN YAR?

SUMMARY: EVER SINCE RETURN OF YAR PRESIDENT HAMDI FROM SAUDI ARABIA RUMORS HAVE ABOUNDED OF CABINET CHANGES. CLEARLY, MATTER IN HANDS OF HAMDI, WHO KEEPING HIS OWN COUNSEL, BUT BEST INFORMED PERSONS DO NOT RPT NOT EXPECT WHOLESALE CHANGES.

1. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT HAMDI, WHILE IN SAUDI ARABIA, CAME AWAY WITH FULL SAUDI SUPPORT AS HEAD OF STATE OF YAR, AND ABDALLAH BIN HUSSAIN AL-AHMAR GOT LITTLE MORE THAN ASSURANCES THAT HE AND HIS TRIBAL COHORTS WOULD NOT BE PERSECUTED. ONE GOT LARGE GRANT OF POWER, IN OTHER WORDS, WHILE OTHER SEEMS TO HAVE RECEIVED ONLY LIMITED IMMUNITY.

2. HOWEVER, RUMORS HAVE CIRCULATED THAT HAMDI HAD TO PAY A PRICE FOR THIS, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF SOME PERSONALITIES CLOSE TO HIM BUT DISLIKED BY SAUDIS AND ABDALLAH BIN HUSSAIN. THERE HAS BEEN GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT ABDAL AZIZ ABD AL-GHANI WOULD CONTINUE AS PRIMIN, BUT CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION AS TO WHICH MINISTERS WOULD BE SHIFTED.
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3. MINFIN JUNAYD WANTS TO LEAVE SANA AFTER SERVING HERE FOR ELEVEN YEARS. HE WANTS EASIER JOB FOR HIMSELF, A BETTER STANDARD OF LIVING FOR HIS SPANISH WIFE AND A BETTER EDUCATION FOR HIS MATURING BLONDE DAUGHTER. HE REPORTEDLY APPLIED, AND WAS ACCEPTED FOR A P-5 LEVEL JOB IN THE UNITED NATIONS, AND HE HAS BEEN NOMINATED TO HAMDI AS NEW YARG AMBASSADOR TO US. HIS REASONS FOR WISHING OUT ARE PERSONAL, NOT POLITICAL, BUT THEY ARE STRONG AND REPORTEDLY ACCEPTED. THIS WOULD APPEAR TO MAKE AT LEASE ONE CABINET MOVE INEVITABLE, AND GIVES SOME SUPPORT TO BELIEF THAT OTHER MOVES MIGHT OCCUR AT SAKME TIME.

4. OTHER MOVES FOCUS, ACCORDING TO USUALLY RELIABLE FOREIGN OFFICE SOURCE, ON ABDALLAH AL-ASNAJ, WHO REPORTEDLY HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO WIN SUPPORT OF SAUDIS AND AS ADENI, IS REGARDED BY MEN LIKE ZAYDI TRIBAL CHIEF ABDALLAH BIN HUSSAIN AS INTERLOPER WITH UNDESIRABLE COTERIE OF BRIGHT AND SELF-INTERESTED SOUTHERNERS (BASHWINDWA, SAID AL-HAKIMI). FOREIGN OFFICE SOURCE QUOTES PRIMIN ABDAL AZIZ AS ACKNOWLEDGING THESE PRESSURES ON ASNAJ, AND SAYING THAT ASNAJ OFFERED TO RESIGN, BUT HAMDI REFUSED TO ACCEPT SUCH A CHANGE. FOREIGN OFFICE SOURCE SAYS THIS PARTLY BECAUSE HAMDI DOES NOT RPT DOES NOT WANT TO APPEAR TO GIVE IN TO SAUDI PRESSURE, AND PARTLY BECAUSE HE DEPENDS HEAVILY AND WITH GREAT SATISFACTION ON ASNAJ FOR VARIETY OF POLITICAL ADVICE IN ARAB WORLD AND INTERNATIONAL ARENA.

5. LINE USED WITH US DIRECTLY AND PERSONALLY BY

ABDAL AZIZ AND ASNAJ DIRECTLY AND PERSONALLY IS THAT NO CHANGES WILL BE MADE.

6. ABDAL KARIM AL-IRYANI, WHO HAS CONSPICUOUSLY DIVORCED HIMSELF FROM POLITICS HERE, AND THUS WIDELY REGARDED AS BEST INFORMED AND MOST ASTUTE OBSERVER, ALSO INSISTS THAT NO CABINET CHANGES WILL OCCUR.

7. BUT RUMORS PERSIST. DESPITE WHAT ASNAJ IS TELLING
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US AND OTHERS ABOUT LACK OF PROSPECTIVE CHANGES, HE IS KNOWN HOWEVER TO BE CONCERNED WITH ATTENTION ATTRACTED RECENTLY BY SALEM BASWINDWA ANOTHER ADENI WHO HAS TITLE OF YAR MINSTATE AND IS USED BY ASNAJ AS PERIPATATIC DIPLOMATIC TROUBLESHOOTER. BASINDWA ENGAGING, SHOWY FIGURE WHO ALSO SERVES AS BUSINESS PARTNER OF ASNAJ. ASNAJ KNOWS H S(AND BASINDWA)

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ARE VULNERABLE TO CHANGES THAT, ALTHOUGH NOT FROM
NORTH, THEY HAVE GATHERED GREAT POWER AND WEALTH INTO
OWN HANDS BY MAKING THEMSELVES PERSONALLY VERY USEFUL
TO HAMDI. THUS, ACCORDING ONE RELIABLE REPORT, ASNAJ
HAS CONSIDERED BASINDWA FOR A FOREIGN POST IN EFFORT
LOWER BOTH THEIR PROFILES.

8. NEITHER RUMOR CONCERNS ABDALLAH BARAKAT WHO, WITH
HIGH SOUNDING TITLE OF DEPUTY PRIMIN FOR INTERNAL
AFFAIRS, HAS REALLY VERY LITTLE TO DO AND AS KHAULANI
TRIBESMAN WHO FORMERLY BLOODY-MINDED SOLDIER AND MININT,
IS NOT LOVED BY TECHNOCRAT PM FROM SHAFAI SOUTH. HIS MAJOR

RESPONSIBILITY (DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN FOOD AID) HAS JUST
BEEN TAKEN AWAY FROM HIM. HE HAS HAD SOME BUT SPORADIC
FUNCTION IN TRIBAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTRY OF MUNICIPALITIES,BUT
HE "COULD BE SPARED", AS ONE CAUSTIC OBSERVER PUT IT.

9. OTHER RUMORS: AHMED ABDO SAID IS SAID TO BE
IN LINE FOR FOREIGN POST, NO POST AT ALL, AND MINFINANCE
IN PLACE OF JUNAYD. SAID WAS PROTEGE OF MOHAMMAD ALI OTHMAN,
TAIZ NOTABLE AND CONSERVATIVE DEFENDER OF REPUBLIC. AFTER
OTHMAN'S ASSASSINATION BY PDRY AGENTS, SAID INSTALLED INCOMPETENT
SON, ABDUL RAHMAN MOHAMMED ALI OTHMAN AS GOVERNOR OF TAIZ
PROVINCE. ABDUL RAHMAN EMBEZZLED AND MISDIRECTED FUNDS,
INCLUDING LARGE AMOUNTS TITLE II WHEAT, AND HAS JUST BEEN
SACKED WHILE SAID OUT OF COUNTRY. SAID, ON OTHER HAND, IS
HIGHLY
POLITICAL ANIMAL WHO HAS SHOWN GREAT PWOERS OF SURVIVAL.

10. DAHMASH (INFORMATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM)
AND HUMRAN (THE SOUTH) ARE ALL REPORTED ON SAUDI
BILL FOR PAYMENT RENDERED TO HAMDI. THEY ARE ALL VERY
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CLOSE PERSONALLY TO HAMDI, TOO, AND NOT LIKELY TO BE
DUMPED UNCEREMONIOUSLY, PARTICULARLY WHEN THEY HAVE
SHOWN CONSPICUOUS LOYALTY TO PRESIDENT DURING PERIOD
HE WAS CONSOLIDATING HIS POWER. BUT THEY ARE DRUNKS,
CORRUPT, FREQUENTLY ALLEGED TO BE HOMOSEXUALS, AND IN HUMRAN'S
CASE THOUGHT TO BE TOO SYMPATHETIC WITH SOUTH.

11. COMMENT: OUR BEST GUESS IS THAT JUNAYD WILL
MOVE AND BE REPLACED, BUT THAT THIS CABINET WILL
REMAIN MORE OR LESS INTACT UNTIL ISSUE OF NEW
ELECTIONS IS SETTLED. IF EARLY ELECTIONS ARE
DIRECTED, CABINET WILL CARRY THROUGH PREPARATORY
PERIOD. IF ELECTIONS ARE PUT OFF INDEFINITELY--
PRESSURES TO CHANGE THE CABINET OR SOME MEMBERS OF IT WILL
CONTINUE TO MOUNT OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS.

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HAMDI HAS CHOSEN BOTH
HIS CABINETS--THE FIRST UNDER AL-AYNI AND THE SECOND
UNDER ABDAL AZIZ-AQTO HELP HIM BUILD HIS POWER BASE.
HE NOW HAS UNRIVALLED POSSESSION OF POWER, A GROUP
OF LOYAL FRIENDS AND TECHNOCRATS IN OFFICE, AND
NO GOOD REASON TO MAKE SWEEPING CHANGES.
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